

REMARKS

In the Office Action mailed August 2, 2004, the Examiner noted that claims 1-29 were pending, allowed claims 8, 13, 19 and 24, and rejected claims 1-7, 9-12, 14-18, 20-23 and 25-29. Claims 1-29 remain pending for reconsideration which is requested. The Examiner's rejections are traversed below.

In the Action the Examiner rejected claims 1-7, 9-12, 14-18, 20-23 and 25-28 over Tsuda and rejected claim 29 over Barr. Both rejections were based on anticipation, that is, a rejection in which all of the features of the claims are allegedly found in the single reference.

Tsuda is directed to setting the importance level of each retrieval or search string when inputting the string into a document retrieval apparatus. Tsuda outputs a document in which the strings are presented highlighted in correspondence to the importance as set when the string is input. That is, the initial relevance or the weight is set before the query of the database occurs, which is before documents are retrieved, and highlighting is based on the originally set weight, that is, based on the input weight.

When pointing to an alleged correspondence between the "word degree calculation unit" of claim 1 and Tsuda the Examiner points to the portions of Tsuda noted below:

For this reason, there is little information available for use at the time of calculating the relevance level of a document of a retrieved candidate, and thereby noise is likely to be induced into the retrieval result (the precision is lowered).

(Tsuda, col. 2, lines 60-62)

Next, the relevance level judging section 14 uses the highlight level of the retrieval character string to thereby calculate the relevance levels in respective documents within the set D (step S13), and sorts them in order of decreasing relevance level (step S14). The document retrieving section carries out an output/feedback process with respect to the retrieved document (step S15).

(Tsuda, col. 8, lines 27-33)

In a case of calculating the relevance level at step S13, the highlight level of the character string specified at a time of inputting is converted into the priority level of the character string thereof, and the relevance level of the document is calculated by considering the priority level. Here, since the highlight level is specified by the font size, the relevance level is calculated on the basis of the priority level corresponding to the font size.

(Tsuda, col. 8, lines 45-52)

These portions of Tsuda discuss a relevance level set by the user based on the level of highlighting input by the user when the query is input.

Barr is directed to a system for searching multimedia contents and has little or no relevance to the present invention.

When pointing to an alleged correspondence between the "indicating" operation of claim 29 and Barr the Examiner points to the portion of Barr noted below:

In accordance with a still further aspect, the present invention is directed to a method for performing a search of a database in an information retrieval system in response to a query having at least one query word with a query word weight and for applying the query word to the database and selecting information from the information retrieval system in accordance with the query word. A query word is selected and assigned a weight. The weight is adjusted depending on whether the query word is a proper noun or slow word. The adjusting can be an increase or a decrease in the weight. Information is selected from the information retrieval system in accordance with the adjusted weight.

(Barr, col. 6, lines 42-53)

These portions of Barr discuss a weight set based on the type of input word.

Once again, the initial relevance or the weight is set before the query, that is before documents are retrieved.

The relevance is set on a user side by the prior art.

In contrast, in the present invention is a system that calculates ("calculating" - claim 1) the "contribution degree" (claim 1) or the "weight" (claim 29) of the words used in the search. This calculation occurs after the search is completed based on the results of the search ("calculating a contribution degree ... in a retrieval result" - claim 1 and "indicating ... a weight ... contributing to the search results" - claim 29). Similar language is found in independent claims 9, 10, 14, 20, 21, and 25-28 emphasizing the calculation of term contribution after the search is complete based on the search results. That is, the system performs a search using the query. Using the search results, the system counts the number of times a word of the retrieval question appears in the retrieved document group or set A and counts the number of times the word appears in retrieved document set B. The document sets A and B are different, such as A including N documents and set B including M documents where M can be greater than or less than N. That is, the relevance or weight is calculated after the search is completed. The word contribution degree is the ratio between the count for A and the count for B for the word. As emphasized in the claims the result or output is weighted, not the input as in the prior art.

It is the system side in the invention that does the automatic rating of the importance level of the words in the search result of a search requested by a user.

By weighting the results of the search, as in the invention, rather than in input string importance, as in the prior art, the present invention is able to provide the user a very different and more useful indication of relevance of the results of the search to what was sought. The prior art does not teach or suggest such.

It is submitted that the present claimed invention patentably distinguishes over Tsuda or Barr and withdrawal of the rejections are requested.

The dependent claims depend from the above-discussed independent claims and are patentable over the prior art for the reasons discussed above. The dependent claims also recite additional features not taught or suggested by the prior art. It is submitted that the dependent claims are independently patentable over the prior art.

It is submitted that claims 8, 13, 19 and 24 continue to be allowable. It is further submitted that the claims are not taught, disclosed or suggested by the prior art. The claims are therefore in a condition suitable for allowance. An early Notice of Allowance is requested.

If any further fees, other than and except for the issue fee, are necessary with respect to this paper, the U.S.P.T.O. is requested to obtain the same from deposit account number 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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11/2/4

By: _____



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